

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 TEGUCI 04347 01 OF 02 150148Z
ACTION SIG-02

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 (ISO) W
-----103838 150238Z /15 C
O 150047Z SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 7871

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 TEGUCIGALPA 4347

EO 11652 N/A
TAGS: ASIG, HO
SUBJECT: EVALUATION OF THE CONSULAR FUNCTION

REF: STATE 208067

THE FOLLOWING IS THE EMBASSY'S RESPONSE TO REFTEL REQUESTING OUR COMMENTS. PARAGRAPH NUMBERING CORRESPONDS TO THAT OF REFTEL. WE REGRET OUR RESPONSE DELAYED DUE TO ABSENCE OF CHIEF OF CONSULAR SECTION TO ATTEND REGIONAL CONSULAR CONFERENCE, SUBSEQUENT ABSENCE OF CHARGE TO ATTEND PANAMA CANAL TREATY SIGNING CEREMONIES IN WASHINGTON, AND OTHER URGENT MESSAGES REQUIRING IMMEDIATE ACTION AND RESPONSE.

I. A) WAIVER OF NIVS FOR LOW-FRAUD COUNTRIES COULD CREATE POOR PUBLIC RELATIONS FOR THOSE COUNTRIES WHOSE CITIZENS ARE STILL REQUIRED TO OBTAIN NIVS. WE BELIEVE REDUCTION OF WORKLOAD MIGHT BE OFFSET BY ADVERSE PUBLIC RELATIONS. THIS POST WOULD EXPERIENCE MUCH DISCONTENT AMONG BOTH THE OFFICIAL COMMUNITY AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC SHOULD NIVS BE WAIVED FOR APPLICANTS FROM NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES. SINCE NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES ARE ALL HIGH FRAUD AREAS, HOWEVER, THIS QUESTION IS ACADEMIC FOR HONDURAS.

B) TO FURTHER FACILITATE TRAVEL WE RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF 212(D)(3)(A) WAIVER FOR 212(A)(28) REFUSALS AT POST FOR
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 TEGUCI 04347 01 OF 02 150148Z

CASES WHERE REFUSAL FILE IS AT POST OF APPLICATION, INASMUCH AS GRANTING OF WATIVER IS NOW ROUTINE AND INFORMATION FOR REFUSAL IS AT POST.

C) WE ALSO PROPOSE REPEAL OF OUTMODED CONSULAR LAWS LISTED IN APPENDIX D OF THE STUDY PREPARED FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE JUNE 1973 ENTITLED THE CONSULAR FUNCTION. MANY OF

THESE LAWS DATE FROM 1906 AND ARE NO LONGER PERTINENT.

2. A) SINCE THE CONSULAR STAFF WAS INCREASED BY ONE OFFICER IN MAY 1976 TO A TOTAL OF THREE OFFICERS, WE DO NOT FORESEE A NEED FOR A FURTHER INCREASE OF THE CONSULAR OFFICER POSITIONS IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE. A TDY CONSULAR POSITION FOR THE AREA BASED IN WASHINGTON WOULD BE OF GREAT ASSISTANCE, HOWEVER, DURING PERIODS OF PEAK WORKLOAD, SUCH AS OCCURRED THIS SUMMER WHEN THERE WAS A TWO-MONTH STAFFING GAP DUE TO TRANSFERS. HAD A COMPLICATED WELFARE AND WHEREABOUTS CASE ARISEN, OR IF ILLNESS OR ACCIDENT HAD INCAPACITATED ONE OF THE TWO REMAINING OFFICERS, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN IMPOSSIBLE TO MAINTAIN CONSULAR SERVICES TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC. DUE TO THE DISTANCE INVOLVED AND ITS SMALL CONSULAR STAFF, THE POST HAS RECEIVED SPECIAL AUTHORIZATION FROM THE DEPARTMENT TO LIMIT VISITS TO THE ONE US CITIZEN PRISONER, LOCATED IN SAN PEDRO SULA (A FIVE-HOUR DRIVE FROM TEGUCIGALPA) TO ONE EVERY TWO MONTHS.

B) ONE ADDITIONAL LOCAL POSITION IS NEEDED. THE INCUMBENT OF THIS POSITION WOULD BE CROSS-TRAINED IN ALL CONSULAR WORK AND COULD ACT IN A ROTATIONAL CAPACITY PROVIDING ASSISTANCE WHENEVER AND WHEREVER REQUIRED. THIS ADDITIONAL POSOTION COULD ALSO BE USED FOR FRAUD INVESTIGATION, PROVIDED THERE WERE FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR TRAVEL, AS RECOMMENDED IN THE POST'S CONSULAR PACKAGE.
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 TEGUCI 04347 01 OF 02 150148Z

3. UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES THERE ARE SUFFICIENT FUNDS TO COVER CONSULAR OPERATIONS, INCLUDING TRAVEL TO VISIT PRISONERS AND FOR A BIMONTHLY TRIP TO THE COUNTRY'S SECOND LARGEST CITY. THE POST'S CURRENT DIFFICULTIES IN VISITING PRISONERS RESULTS FROM LACK OF TIME, NOT LACK OF FUNDS.

4. CONSULAR OFFICERS AT THIS POST DO PERCEIVE THEMSELVES AS SECOND-CLASS CITIZENS. THIS FEELING IS NOT DUE TO ANY ACTION, OR LACK OF ACTION, ON THE PART OF THE CHIEF OF MISSION, BUT RATHER TO THE WAY IN WHICH THE CONSULAR OFFICERS' COLLEAGUES IN THE OTHER CONES VIEW THE NATURE OF CONSULAR WORK. THEIR COLLEAGUES AT THIS, AND MANY OTHER POSTS, NOTING THE LONG LINES OF PEOPLE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE CONSULAR SECTION'S WAITING ROOM CONCLUDE THAT CONSULAR WORK IS SIMPLY A DULL, ROUTINE AND TROUBLESOME EXERCISE IN CROWD CONTROL AND THEY INSTINCTIVELY VZSHY AWAY FROM IT, PREFERRING TO INVOLVE THEMSELVES IN MORE "GLAMOROUS" SUBSTANTIVE WORK. THIS, HOWEVER, DOES NOT PREVENT THE CONSULAR OFFICERS' COLLEAGUE'S FROM BELIEVING THEMSELVES EXPERTS IN CONSULAR WORK EVEN THOUGH THEIR "EXPERTISE" MAY HAVE DERIVED FROM A SINGLE TOUR AS A JUNIOR OFFICER OR FROM EXPERIENCE GAINED MANY YEARS EARLIER. MANY

HAVE FOND RECOLLECTIONS OF THEIR OWN CONSULAR EXPERIENCES, WHICH ARE FOR THE MOST PART IRRELEVANT TO THE TYPE OF CONSULAR SERVICES NOW PERFORMED, AND THE GREATLY INCREASED QUANTITY OF SERVICES DEMANDED. NOT ONLY ARE CURRENT CONSULAR ACTIVITIES VASTLY GREATER IN VOLUME OF SERVICES DEMANDED, THEY ARE OFTEN MUCH MORE COMPLEX IN MANY INDIVIDUAL CASES. THESE CHANGES HAVE NATURALLY RESULTED FROM THE TRAVEL EXPLOSION, INCREASES IN DRUG ABUSE, CHANGES IN LEGISLATION RELATING TO VISAS, AND THE INCREASED CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST IN INDIVIDUAL CASES. THAT THIS FEELING IS SHARED NOT ONLY BY THE CONSULAR OFFICERS' COLLEAGUES, BUT BY MANAGEMENT IN THE DEPARTMENT, IS ILLUSTRATED BY A STUDY OF POST STAFFING PATTERNS. AT THE MAJORITY OF EMBASSIES IN ARA POSTS, WHICH USUALLY HAVE VERY COMPLEX WELFARE AND PROTECTION PROBLEMS AND STAGGERING VISA DEMANDS, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 04 TEGUCI 04347 01 OF 02 150148Z

THE GRADE OF THE CHIEF OF THE CONSULAR SECTION IS ONE TO TWO GRADES BELOW THAT OF THE OTHER CHIEFS OF SECTION IN THE SAME EMBASSY, EVEN THOUGH HE OR SHE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SUPERVISION AND MANAGEMENT OF LARGER AMERICAN AND LOCAL STAFFS. A MORE DETAILED EXPLANATION OF THE BASIS FOR THESE ATTITUDES IS CONTAINED IN A STUDY PREPARED BY THE BUREAU OF SECURITY AND CONSULAR AFFAIRS IN 1973 AS WELL AS IN SEVERAL STUDIES PREPARED BY THE CONSULAR OFFICERS ASSOCIATION.

5. THE CHIEF OF THE CONSULAR SECTION AT THIS POST DOES ACTIVELY CONTRIBUTE TO THE PARM. PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE AT OTHER POSTS, HOWEVER, INDICATES THAT THIS PARTICIPATION IN POLICY MATTERS IS BY NO MEANS UNIVERSAL.

6. HONDURAS HAD UNTIL 1971 A CONSTITUENT POST AT SAN PEDRO SULA, THE INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL CENTER OF THE COUNTRY AND THE PRINCIPAL RESIDENCE OF MANY AMERICANS. THE CLOSING OF THE CONSULATE DID, AND STILL DOES, CREATE SERIOUS PUBLIC RELATIONS AND OTHER PROBLEMS. AT PRESENT A CONSULAR

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 TEGUCI 04347 02 OF 02 150202Z
ACTION SIG-02

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 (ISO)W

-----103911 150244Z /15 C

O 150047Z SEP 77

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 7872

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 2 OF 2 TEGUCIGALPA 4347

VISIT TO SAN PEDRO SULA IS SCHEDULED EVERY TWO MONTHS TO PROVIDE PASSPORT AND NOTARIAL SERVICES. THIS PROCEDURE APPEARS ADEQUATE FOR THE PRESENT. WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND AGAINST APPOINTING CONSULAR AGENTS. MANY CITIZENSHIP QUESTIONS AT THIS POST ARE SUFFICIENTLY COMPLICATED TO REQUIRE EXPERIENCED CONSULAR OFFICERS TO HANDLE THEM. MOREOVER, OUR MAIN WORKLOAD IS VISAS.

7. FOR THE MOST PART, THIS POST IS SATISFIED WITH THE BACKSTOPPING PROVIDED BY THE DEPARTMENT. RECENTLY THE DEPARTMENT HAS UPHELD 212(A)(19) REFUSALS AT THIS POST; IT HAS ALSO UPHELD REFUSALS OF APPLICATIONS FOR A-1 STATUS WHERE A-2 STATUS IS NOT APPROPRIATE. POST WOULD APPRECIATE BETTER AND MORE REALISTIC GUIDELINES ON 212(A)(15) REFUSALS FOR IVS PARTICULARLY WHEN THEY ARE NEEDED TO ANSWER ATTORNEY'S INQUIRY.

8. THE CONSULAR SECTION MOVED LAST WEEK FROM ITS CRAMPED QUARTERS IN THE EMBASSY BUILDING TO SPACIOUS QUARTERS IN THE NEW BUILDING ALSO OCCUPIED BY AID AND USIS ACROSS THE STREET FROM THE CHANCERY.

THE ACQUISITION OF NEW QUARTERS RESULTED IN LARGE PART FROM THE SPACE REQUIREMENTS OF OTHER AGENCIES, WITH THE CONSULAR SECTION THEN BEING ALLOTTED THE GROUND FLOOR SPACE OF THE BUILDING. PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO OBTAIN NEW QUARTERS FOR THE SECTION, INDEPENDENT OF OTHER AGENCIES, HAD NOT BEEN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 TEGUCI 04347 02 OF 02 150202Z

SUCCESSFUL ALTHOUGH THE SECTION HAD CLEARLY OUTGROWN THE SPACE PROVIDED SEVERAL YEARS PRIOR TO THE MOVE AS INDICATED IN PRIOR INSPECTORS' REPORTS.

9. THIS POST HAS NOT FELT IT HAS BEEN UNDER ANY RESTRAINTS RESULTING FROM THE PRIVACY ACT AND/OR THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT. CONSULAR OFFICERS, HOWEVER, RECALL PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES AT OTHER POSTS, WHEN THERE WAS A RELUCTANCE TO REPORT FULL FINDINGS TO THE DEPARTMENT ON ARREST CASES, BECAUSE OF THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT. THE PRIVACY ACT HAS CAUSED PROBLEMS ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS AT THIS POST WHEN CONSULAR OFFICERS WERE UNABLE TO INFORM INTERESTED PARENTS OR RELATIVES AND FRIENDS OF THE WHEREABOUTS OR STATUS OF AMERICAN CITIZENS IN HONDURAS. THIS HAS OFTEN CAUSED

THE INQUIRER UNNECESSARY CONCERN AND ON AT LEAST ONE OCCASION THE US CITIZEN CONSIDERABLE INCONVENIENCE; I.E., A FIVE-HOUR TRIP TO THE EMBASSY FROM SAN PEDRO SULA.

10. WE FORESEE A GRADUAL AND CONTINUING INCREASE IN OUR GENERAL CONSULAR WORKLOAD. MANY PETITIONS FOR IV APPLICATIONS HAVE BEEN FILED RECENTLY, BUT IT IS TOO EARLY TO ASCERTAIN THEIR IMPACT ON THE WORKLOAD.

11. SINCE THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE FEEDBACK RECEIVED FROM THE DEPARTMENT ON THE CONSULAR PACKAGE, IT IS DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE ITS USEFULNESS. ALL THOSE SEEKING THE POST'S ASSISTANCE ARE REQUESTED TO COMPLETE A FORM PRIOR TO SEEING A CONSULAR OFFICER. WE REALIZE THAT THIS FORM IS AT BEST AN IMPERFECT WAY TO QUANTIFY PROTECTION AND WELFARE WORK. THE MAJOR PROBLEMS DO NOT USUALLY DERIVE FROM SIMPLE "WALKINS" AND THERE ARE OFTEN MANY QUESTIONS THAT CAN BE ANSWERED TELEPHONICALLY.

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 TEGUCI 04347 02 OF 02 150202Z

12. CONSULAR OFFICERS RECEIVE THE COOPERATION OF LOCAL RESIDENTS, PARTICULARLY THROUGH TWO ORGANIZATIONS, THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF HONDURAS AND THE WOMEN'S CLUB, BOTH OF WHICH HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO A FUND FOR DESTITUTE AMERICANS AND PRISONERS.

13. BILATERAL RELATIONS TO SOME EXTENT HAVE BEEN ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY A LACK OF UNDERSTANDING BY GOH, THE MEDIA AND GENERAL PUBLIC OF US IMMIGRATION LAWS AND REGULATIONS REQUIRING CAREFUL PROCESSING AND DOCUMENTATION OF ELIGIBILITY OF APPLICANTS. DESPITE THE BEST EFFORTS OF CONOFFS TO EXPLAIN THE REASONS FOR REFUSALS OR NEED FOR ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION, THE EMBASSY RECEIVES A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF INFORMAL COMPLAINTS FROM THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND OTHER GOH ENTITIES, FROM IMPORTANT HONDURANS, FROM US CONGRESSMEN AND OTHER SOURCES. PREPARING RESPONSES ON COMPLAINTS AND INQUIRIES, ESPECIALLY FROM CONGRESSMEN, PLACES AN UNUSUAL BURDEN ON CONOFFS. OWING TO THE HIGHLY PERSONAL NATURE OF THE VISA PROCEDURE, OFTEN INVOLVING CRITICAL FAMILY, HEALTH AND ECONOMIC ASPECTS, REFUSALS AND DELAYS IN PROCESSING CAN TRIGGER STRONG EMOTIONAL REACTIONS. IT PERHAPS IS NOT UNUSUAL, THEREFORE, THAT PUBLIC RELATIONS PROBLEMS HAVE ARISEN WHEN VIEWED ALSO WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF HONDURAS' HIGH RATE OF NON-BONA-FIDES. THE EMBASSY IS RELYING ON AN INTERNAL REFERRAL PROCEDURE TO ENSURE RECONSIDERATION OF IMPORTANT CASES AND ON SPECIAL EFFORTS BY ALL OFFICERS TO IDENTIFY CASES HAVING A POTENTIAL FOR ADVERSE IMPACT.

14. THE CONSULAR OFFICERS AND LOCAL EMPLOYEES AT THIS POST ARE ABLE AND RESPONSIBLE. THEY HAVE HAD TO WORK UNDER CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE FOR EXTENDED PERIODS IN CRAMPED, INADEQUATE QUARTERS, OFTEN DURING PERIODS WHEN THERE HAS BEEN A SHORTAGE OF CONSULAR OFFICERS DUE TO GAPS OF TWO OR THREE MONTHS BETWEEN ASSIGNMENTS. AS A FORMER CONSULAR OFFICER (WHOSE EXPERTISE MAY WELL HAVE BECOME OUTDATED) LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 04 TEGUCI 04347 02 OF 02 150202Z

I STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT THE CONSULAR OFFICERS AND STAFF SHOULD RECEIVE THE FULL COOPERATION, ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT OF ALL MISSION ELEMENTS.
BARTCH

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 15-Sep-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977TEGUCI04347
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770334-0425
Format: TEL
From: TEGUCIGALPA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770958/aaaabwxi.tel
Line Count: 295
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: edef3245-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SIG
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 STATE 208067
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1253477
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EVALUATION OF THE CONSULAR FUNCTION
TAGS: ASIG, HO
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbci://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/edef3245-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009